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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a study that investigated a top-down leadership approach that gradually shifted to a collaborative paradigm. It focuses on one junior high school's efforts to increase academic and social success for all its students. The restructuring process began when, for the first time, a female principal was hired in this 35-year-old school. She came with a new vision of leadership and of academic structure that featured total inclusion. Data were obtained through a review of artifacts (school minutes, meeting notes, and articles) and interviews (focus groups and individual interviews) of 10 target groups in the school. The results indicate that for the school to make meaningful change, the top-down or "I" characteristic of leadership had to be transformed to "we." A top-down process had occurred when the principal shared her vision for change that would promote the academic success of every student in the school. The development of community and leadership emerged through a process of teaming in which teams of 6 teachers taught inclusion groups that involved about 20 resource students for each team. As a consequence, communication within the school operated through individual and group meetings, and decision making was placed in the teachers' hands. (Contains 41 references.) (Author/RJM)

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FROM "I" TO "WE": REFLECTIONS ABOUT LEADERSHIP

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FROM "I" TO "WE": REFLECTIONS ABOUT LEADERSHIP

Abstract

This study investigated a top-down leadership approach which gradually shifted to a collaborative paradigm as one junior high school restructured to increase academic and social success for all its students. The restructuring process began when the first female principal was hired in this 35-year-old school. She came with a new vision of leadership and of academic structure that included total inclusion. Data obtained through review of artifacts (school minutes, meeting notes, and articles) and interviews (focus groups and individual interviews) were analyzed using NUD•IST software. An overarching postulate of leadership emerged from the results of this study: For this school to make meaningful change, the top down or "I" characteristic of leadership had to be transformed to "we." This study describes an interesting journey of leadership and raises several questions for future research in understanding educational leadership for the twenty-first century.

Introduction

Educators tend to allow outsiders, mainly the industrial world, to shape their understanding of leadership. They have borrowed corporate concepts of leadership, instead of creating their own definitions of what it means to be a leader in the schoolhouse today (Murphy & Beck, 1994). In defense of educators, Sergiovanni (1996) suggests that educators *do* have ideas of what it means to be a school leader, and he encourages them to "invent [their] own practice[s]" (p. xiv) rather than to rely on others. Initially, creating a definition of school leadership might seem easily attainable; however, the complexity of the task is reflected in the extensive work of Rost (1993). After struggling to establish a generic definition of *leadership*, he ultimately claims that leadership is at present "anything anyone wants to say it is" (p. 179).

The Industrial Paradigm Revisited

However, Rost (1993) does believe that "the industrial paradigm of leadership continues to dominate the study and practice of leadership" (p. 181). Patterson (1993) applies this discussion to school leaders. "For the past seventy-five years, the idea of leadership has reflected the industrial model . . . leadership has consistently been characterized by central values of *power* and *control*" (p. 2). Further, he notes that "organizations worldwide, including schools, have been built on this concept of the leader directing others to fulfill a vision conceived by that leader" (p. v). The expectation that school leaders today might initiate change within their schools in a top-down fashion is indeed acceptable.

A New Paradigm for Leadership

However, educators are beginning to investigate more collegial principles of leadership and are realizing the uniqueness of leadership in the schoolhouse. For example, schools, unlike the industrial world, have a moral responsibility to work together to ensure that students learn (Sergiovanni, 1996). King, Seashore Louis, Marks, and Peterson (1996), in a study of 24 schools, discuss the important role teachers have in participatory decision making and its relation to enhancing student learning.

Much is being written and studied today by educators regarding unique patterns of leadership and instruction in schools. Of 399 international dissserations written between 1990 - 1997, 117 addressed the topic of shared responsibility of instructioanl leaders (Gibb, 1998). "Today's principals are being challenged to carry out those functions [instructional leadership] in ways that are less direct and more collaborative. The goal is not to do it, but to see it happen" (Lashway, 1995, p. 3).

Even though a persistent industrial model continues to dominate today's leadership practices in both education and industry, it appears that a more relational leadership paradigm is evolving (Rost, 1993). Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) embrace this position, characterizing it as collaborative leadership: a "we" position in contrast to an "I" approach, or, as they refer to it, "individualism" (p. 43).

The frequent appearance of descriptors like *collaboration* in the literature suggests that educators are cognizant of a new leadership movement and perhaps are moving toward their own perspective of

leadership in the schoolhouse (Patterson, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1996; Webb, Shumway, & Shute, 1996). Other descriptors used in conjunction with leadership--such as *facilitator, coach, mentor, teacher-leader, change agent, visionary, enabler, supporter and friend*--are also appearing more frequently in the literature.

Emphasis on these collaborative descriptors suggests that where top-down directives of the past have not produced the results educators intended for schools, a movement from the pinnacle of the pyramid to the center appears to be emerging as the perspective for school leadership today. Senge resonates with this idea in the foreward to the Costa and Liebmann (1995) book, The Process-Centered School. "It takes years to develop the skills and knowledge to understand complex human systems. . . to reverse years of conditioning in authoritarian organizations in which everyone 'looks upward' for direction, [instead of] 'looking sideways' " (page x).

A Shift in Perspective From "We" to "I" in Leadership.

Senge's idea of complexity is echoed by Fullan and Hargreaves (1991), "The challenge is great." Fullan and Hargreaves further speculate that the reason a collaborative or, as described in this study, a "we" perspective of leadership has not been more widely accepted as a model for schools is that the role of the teacher in this complex process has been overlooked. "Educational reform has failed time and time again . . . because reform has either ignored teachers or oversimplified what teaching is about" (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, p. xiii). Most educators appear to believe in the importance of collaborative leadership, but the skills involved in the process of

transferring ownership from the top to the center have not been documented, nor have they been fully understood. Based on this thinking, Fullan (1996) raises the question that sets the direction of this study:

> Assuming that the top [the administration] has already worked on matters of vision and direction, it would probably have done so in collaboration with various parts of the system. This process would have mobilized only a small percentage of those who need to become involved-- probably 5% at the most. What strategies, then, are going to be most effective in working with the remaining 95%? (pp. 421-22)

Within the context of this thinking, several other questions emerge that form the framework for our research: Can both top-down and collaborative leadership operate at the same time? If so, what skills are involved in the process of transferring ownership from the top to the center? Is the result worth the effort? This study attempts to provide some insight to these questions.

The Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study was to document a shift of leadership style in a junior high school, a project that began in a top-down fashion but eventually changed to a side-by-side process. As a result of this collaborative organizational process, a successful inclusion plan was implemented and assessed. This paper begins with a description of the setting and the participants, followed by an explanation of the procedures and interview questions used in obtaining and analyzing a rich data set that provided insight into the

leadership process in this school. We then pesent our results, highlighting the initial guiding principles, influences, vision, assumptions, and activities that shaped the leadership process. In this section, a certain amount of narrative about actual activities and decisions of this school's leadership is interwoven with analytical comments about the reasons why events unfolded as they did. We then share our results, providing some insight into how top-down and collaborative leadership paradigms can be mutually supportive and into which skills are involved in the process of transferring ownership from administrators to the teachers who are actually carrying out most aspects of the change. We offer discussion in support of such change efforts and pose questions for future research.

Methodology

The Setting

The research setting was a suburban middle class public junior high school in central Utah. The staff included four administrators--one principal, two vice-principals, and one counselor--and 64 teachers. This faculty served approximately 1300 students (120 students with special needs), divided fairly evenly across the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. Traditionally the school had had both resource and self-contained classrooms. In the restructuring process, the service delivery model was modified to provide special education services through what the staff and faculty of that school call an "inclusion program." To facilitate the integration of these

students with special needs, the faculty and staff at the school created a school-wide inclusion program based on six interdisciplinary teams.

Each team included general education teachers for each of the core curricular subjects (reading, math, English, science/health, and American history); a special education teacher; support staff, including intern teachers from a nearby university which had established a partnership with the school; and about 20 resource students, along with approximately 200 general education students. The special education teachers worked in the reading, math, English and science classrooms to provide direct service to students with disabilities and to assist other students as needed. Teacher and support staff teams met daily during a specially-arranged preparation period to discuss concerns with course content, student workload, and individual student behavior and needs.

The idea for this change was initiated when a new principal was hired (the first female principal to serve in this 35-year-old school). Prior to her hiring, the school leadership had been what might be described as authoritarian. Many parents, particularly parents of resource students, were unhappy with ways that teaching and learning were conducted within the school. When this new principal entered the school with a vision for change that included providing a more effective educational setting for resource students, parents were eager for change. The majority of the teachers at this time were less enthusiastic, as they had been in a status quo setting for many years.

The Participants

Ten target groups, totaling 42 individuals, were randomly selected for the data sample analyzed in this study. These participants included members of the school administrative team, current and past PTA members, a city school board member, general and special education teachers participating in the new program, university interns, and a principal from an elementary school in the junior high school catchment area.

Data Collection

The research team, consisting of the authors of this study and one graduate assistant, first examined artifacts connected with the leadership processes in this junior high school since the reform effort was initiated in 1993. These sources included documents related to staff meetings, staff and parent newsletters, the principal's personal notes from meetings and conferences, pertinent articles of recent research, and correspondence from staff members, parents, and central office personnel. After the team had reviewed these primary sources, six interview questions were formulated and piloted with two school administrators, one general education teacher, and one student intern. Minor changes to the questions were incorporated.

Data were collected through individual and group interviews based on these six interview questions: (a) What is the team-inclusion project at Orem Junior High School all about? (b) How did the vision for the project unfold? (c) Why did you participate in the project? (d) How are you kept informed about the developments of

the project? (e) What is successful about the project and why? (f) What doesn't appear to be working and why?

Interview Procedures

Individual interviews were conducted with the school principal, the vice principal responsible for counseling, and two ninth grade teachers. In addition, four focus group interviews were held with participants in the project: general education teachers, special education resource teachers, and a university student intern. Each group consisted of 6 to 10 individuals representing the seventh and eighth grade teams. During the 45 minute sessions, participants in each group were asked first to answer the questions in writing, then to contribute an oral response which could be audio taped.

Data Analysis

Analyses of these data were then conducted using three methods for the interpretation of emerging themes and patterns (Bogden & Biklin, 1992): use of NUD•IST (Nonnumerical Unstructured Data by supporting processes of Indexing, Searching and Theorizing), a computer assisted program for interpreting qualitative data; the strategy of concept mapping; and personal interpretations made by the researchers in the study.

First, transcripts were coded and prepared for the NUD•IST software which analyzed qualitative data. NUD•IST allowed the researchers to retrieve data according to key words and to participants in the study. Such key words as *leadership, principal, change, restructuring,* and *students*, along with the pronouns *I, we,*

they, and *them* were entered for further coding. In addition, data were categorized according to participants. For example, all entries from seventh grade teachers, eighth grade teachers, resource teachers, administrators, and student teachers were entered and analyzed for emerging themes and patterns. Further, the data were analyzed using concept maps (Novak & Gown, 1996). Data from the NUD•IST retrieval and the concept mapping were reviewed by the researchers for patterns and themes and were further categorized as concept maps. This second step allowed researchers to correlate the data with events that had transpired.

Results

From the responses to the six interview questions, the researchers framed tentative conclusions regarding school leadership and the change process. These conclusions were based on the themes and patterns that emerged in the data analysis. First, we noticed that in every substantial interview, the individual viewed the principal's leadership as essential to school change, supporting the importance of beginning with top-down leadership. Second, we discovered some variations between what was written and what was verbalized by the participants. For example, participants tended to be more open in their written comments, expressing their concerns with some aspects of the restructuring process. Third, during this leadership process a chronological sequence became evident that presented the importance of collaborative forms of leadership. We present each of these ideas for further discussion, along with a certain amount of

narrative about actual activities and decisions of this school's leadership in emerging chronological order:

1. A partnership with a local university is utilized.
2. Additional school finances are pursued.
3. The principal acknowledges the school's power teachers.
4. The principal shares a vision of teaching and learning.
5. Leadership shifts from top down to "sideways."
6. Teachers begin to take ownership: "I" becomes "We."
7. The principal maintains the change process.

A Partnership With a Local University is Utilized

We learned early in our study that the principal considered time to be the rarest resource in the plan for change. By examining artifacts, we discovered that she had developed a strategy to release teachers and administrators from teaching and other duties so that they might participate in more leadership opportunities. Through a partnership with a local university, she was able to arrange for student interns. These were students who had completed their university courses and were hired on one-year contracts for approximately half the regular teacher's salary in lieu of completing their one-semester student teaching experience. In this particular school, at least one of these interns was placed with each of the teaching teams and given all the responsibilities of a regular teacher.

In addition, the principal worked with the teachers' scheduling plan to arrange for teachers working on the teams to have released time to meet daily during school hours. During this preparation meeting the team was able to plan together, discuss student issues,

and provide input into the daily activities of the school. In order to compensate for this additional period, teachers agreed to take an extra three students per class.

The interview transcripts revealed that as teachers were given more leadership responsibilities, the conversations changed from an emphasis on "I" and "they" to more frequent use of "we." For example, as teachers responded to the first four research questions the following statements were common: "She [the principal] made it all happen" and "They told us how they wanted it to happen." The statements were not meant as derogatory; rather the pronouns *she* and *they* reflected that the teachers were not involved and really did not care about how things happened. As the research questions unfolded, particularly questions five and six dealing with the success and problems of the restructuring process, the conversations began to include descriptions of professional development opportunities and of shared vision. The following perspectives became dominant: "We planned a day retreat for all faculty" and "We met with parents to ensure than they understood the changes that were happening within our school."

Additional School Finances are Pursued

In addition to human resource support such as interns, financial support was required to enable additional planning. A Centennial School Grant, offered by the State of Utah for the purpose of school improvement, was written and obtained in 1993 to provide supplemental funding. In addition, companies such as Pepsi Cola generated funds by placing their vending machines in the school.

These additional dollars paid for teachers, student interns, and school administrators to travel to conferences, visit other school sites, and attend pre-school retreats. (An optional pre-school two-day retreat held prior to the first year of the plan garnered 97% attendance.)

The Principal Acknowledges the Power Teachers

The next step in the process was to ensure the support of the "power teachers" in the school. The artifacts clarified the principal's interpretation of power teachers to mean those teachers who she could depend on to provide honest answers to tough questions about the direction of the restructuring. This was a two-stage process. Stage one was to identify key teachers and to meet informally with them in and outside of school time. The principal's early personal note indicated that she talked with several teachers a day in attempting to identify the power teachers. She asked them questions about their suggestions for further changes in the school, their ideas regarding what was presently happening in the school, and their wish lists. She sought the teachers out separately for feed back regarding her plans. As she explained to us in an interview.

> After talking with each of these teachers, I let things sit for a while and waited for them [teachers] to approach me with their thinking. Gradually teachers began to seek me for additional conversations. They were beginning to move to "we" thinking. These power teachers suggested conferences that they should attend, visits for *us* to other schools in the area, books for *us* to read, etc.

Stage two brought these teachers together for weekly meetings they referred to as BLT (Building Leadership Team). We learned through the principal's personal notes that the BLT was her idea to empower teachers and to eventually move leadership from the top to the center. However, in our interviews with teachers, we heard many of them say that the idea for the BLT was conceived by teachers wishing to be more involved in the school decision making process. BLT meetings were first held one hour prior to school, then moved to after school. The principal chaired these meetings and opened them to any school-related issue other than personnel. Often what had appeared to be simple agenda items to be presented for mere ratification ended up in lengthy debates when participants realized the solutions were not simple matters. For example, the boys' football team needed new uniforms. It was revealed that the school budget was adequate to cover the expense, and the football coach smiled in anticipation that his request would be approved. But several teachers asked questions about why the girls' teams were not being given equal dollars, followed by questions of why the boys' football team could not at least raise half the required cost of the uniforms. The football coach left the meeting prepared to fund raise for half the required amount.

Further, we probed the records and interview data to see if the principal had actually planned to move her leadership position from the pinnacle to the center of the structure. She explained that she believed in teacher ownership and had made it her plan from the very beginning. "From years of teaching, I realized what teachers do not need is another meeting to attend, rather what they need is to be

presented with ideas that will ultimately benefit students. Once this is clear, anything is possible."

The Principal Shares a Vision of Teaching and Learning

We learned early in our data collection that the principal could clearly express her beliefs about teaching and learning. The following sentence, which appeared in the principal's personal notes, supported her personal convictions of leadership: "Leaders must first know who they are, for it is only then that they are capable of leading." It became obvious to us at the onset of this study that the principal, although in her late thirties, had taken time in her career to understand herself and to define her values and goals. In the words of one teacher, "She knew which mountains she was willing to die on."

The process of change began five years ago when the principal addressed her faculty in an inaugural speech entitled "Come Dream With Me." The lead sentence of her speech clearly conveys her personal educational philosophy: "My basic philosophy of education is that everything and everyone in schools should invite the realization of human potential, and in that pursuit, I feel the administrative structure plays a key role" (p. 1). This one line previewed the changes to come. It was through the direct role of the administration, beginning with top-down leadership and gradually merging into sideways leadership, that the school would be restructured to enhance teaching and learning for approximately 60 teachers and 1300 students. This would mean reorganizing the duties of administration and staff, building on a school-university

partnership for human resources, grouping students and teachers into academic teams, scheduling time to achieve flexibility, increasing staff in-services, meeting additional budgetary concerns, updating school technology, meeting with outside agencies, and communicating these changes to the entire school community.

What is unique about this visionary direction is that it began in a top-down fashion, a strategy most leaders would initially predict to be doomed to failure. It did not fail, largely because of the way it was planned and carried out. As we reviewed the principal's notes (one of our significant primary sources), we found that prior to sharing her vision with her faculty she had taken important steps, as described earlier, to ensure that implementation would be practicable and efficient, and that the necessary human and material resources would be available to empower teachers to eventually take ownership for the restructuring process.

When we asked her what the role of the principal would be once teacher ownership was established, she said:

> Teacher ownership does not mean that the principal should abdicate his or her position. You can't be appointed to be the school principal and be somebody else. The principal is ultimately responsible for all that transpires within the school, even if the leadership is shared.

One teacher in the school described this process as "sideways" leadership.

We defined sideways leadership as leading from the middle. This often begins with a top-down, active administrative endorsement and relatively passive teacher participation and

gradually changes as the plan unfolds. In the change involved in this s;tudy, teachers slowly chose to participate in the plan, accepting new roles and responsibilities not defined at the onset of the restructuring process. Thus teachers were not active during the initial stages; therefore they did not experience the negative chaos that most change unearths, a chaos which often causes busy teachers to abandon change for the comfort of the familiar. Teachers, instead, were invited to become more involved in the process as the leadership shifted to the middle, and the problems were more defined. The direction became more obvious, the association of change became more meaningful in terms of meeting student needs, and teachers were invited to participate as advisors. Such advisory activities were often less time consuming than unfocused initial meetings and after-school brainstorming activities. In advisory roles, teachers shaped the momentum and received immediate credit for their ideas and participation. In this role, they accepted ownership and often led out into uncharted areas to enhance the process in ways not anticipated at the beginning. Teachers' actual involvement in projects initiated through top-down leadership is often slower at first than it might be in projects that began with collaborative or sideways leadership efforts.

Leadership Shifts From Top-Down to "Sideways" Leadership

As we reviewed the principal's inaugural speech to her faculty, we noted that she clearly intended to support principles similar to a technique of sideways leadership:

> I believe strongly in teacher empowerment. I believe in bringing the decisions to the school level, where those closest to students may apply their expertise in making decisions that will promote school effectiveness. I don't just give lip service to this notion. I really believe that as teachers become involved in the decision-making process, their productivity increases and the school as a whole benefits from more appropriate services. (p. 1)

One teacher explained what these words really meant in the day-to-day operation of the school.

> No decision about anything is ever made without it being discussed by the Building Leadership Team (BLT). The BLT members bring back the decisions to the school teams and/or departments, and then we vote in faculty meeting on everything. In 21 years of teaching, I never before felt involved with the decisions that go on in the school.

Forming teams of teachers and students was central to the change process. The objective was to institute an inclusion program for resource students by arranging inclusive groups that would function as a school-in-a-school structure. When teachers were asked how they were assigned teams, most teachers thought "it just happened." Others recalled that teachers were first asked to volunteer for the teams, and then assignments were made based on their responses. The fact that many could not recall exactly how the teams were formed suggests to us that teachers were either totally apathetic or comfortable with the leadership. Further probing showed that comfort was the answer. One teacher represented the

thinking of the majority (demonstrated through NUD•IST in the number of times similar statements were made): "This was the brain child of the principal." Even with this realization, teacher responses were positive in accepting the idea and beginning the restructuring process.

> We had a school vote and the bulk of the school voted for it, 54-4 . . . . I had heard about the concept of teaming [for inclusion] at a conference, so I was totally sold on the idea. I jumped on the bandwagon. I knew this would be of direct benefit to our struggling resource students. I felt that my ideas were important and administration listened to them.

The vice principal's response to the forming of teams showed support of the directive approach, "We [the administration] assigned teachers, students and 20 resource students to the team. One resource teacher was assigned to each team." When asked why he accepted the vision, he explained that he agreed with the principal that students with special needs were not receiving the most beneficial services to date in this school and he wanted to see change. The use of the word "we" was found throughout his interview.

Teachers Begin to Take Ownership: Watching "I" become "We"

The frequent use of the pronoun *we* by teachers and administrators was impressive. Fullan (1993), makes sense of what it means to transfer such ownership:

> Deep ownership comes through the learning that arises from full engagement in solving problems. In this sense, ownership is stronger in the middle of a successful change process than at

> the beginning and stronger still at the end than at the middle or beginning. (p. 31)

This process described by Fullan is reflected by the fact that after five years in the restructuring process teachers appeared very comfortable with what was happening at the school. We determined this feeling of comfort to be a component of teacher ownership. Fullan further states, "Saying that ownership is crucial begs the question, unless one knows how it is achieved" (p. 31).

A number of administrative actions increased ownership by teachers: Teachers were encouraged to attend conferences, several retreats were planned for all the school stakeholders, and an advisory committee of teachers and administrators was formed to meet weekly. (Teachers were asked to volunteer for the committee, and released time was provided for team meetings through use of interns involved with a university partnership.)

The Principal Maintains the Change Process

A final review of the transcripts revealed that the actual steps involved in the restructuring process of this school were relatively unstructured. As Fullan (1993) contends, "Change is a journey, not a blueprint" (p. 25). The principal stated:

> Things just seemed to unfold as teachers began to approach me with their thoughts, and I was suddenly responding to their ideas. Thoughts came from the staff for involving parents in the decision making process, forming student and teacher academic teams, investigating a school-within-a-school concept [dividing students into groups assigned to a team of teachers].

developing curriculum and activities appropriate for all students [such as increasing cooperative learning in classes], dealing with student problems as teaching teams, teaching across the curriculum, developing a concept of productivity to allow an increase in teacher pay [by increasing class loads by three or four students], developing seven period days, [with one period for team meetings], ensuring that teaching teams could meet each day [by hiring intern teachers], developing the school technology [a phone and computer in every room], and increasing the financial resources of the school [a principal with an ingenious ability to find money].

Conclusion

Although the process for change in this junior high school began in a top-down fashion, collaborative leadership efforts were significant to the restructuring effort. The progress of collaborative paradigms of leadership is evidence that educators are emerging with their own definitions of what it means to lead in the schoolhouse, a development that Sergiovanni has been encouraging for many years. The preceding discussion traced the leadership journey of one junior high school from a top-down process to a collaborative paradigm that we described as "sideways" leadership. In doing so, the study research questions were addressed: Can you have both--top down and collaborative leadership working together? If you have both, what are the skills involved in the process of

transferring ownership from the top to the center? and Is it worth the effort?

Ten target groups, totaling 42 individuals, were randomly sampled in the junior high school community through individual and small group interviews to learn their perceptions regarding the school leadership process that had transformed their school from an "I" to a "we" concept of leadership.

The artifact and interview data indicated that a top-down process occurred when the principal of the school shared her vision for change that would promote the academic success of every student in the school, including those with disabilities. Prior to this time, the school had held self-contained classes for resource students. The principal indicated that her dream would become reality when a sense of community was achieved in the school among teachers and among both regular and special education students. The development of community and sideways leadership emerged through a process of teaming in which teams of six teachers taught inclusion groups that involved about 20 resource students for each team.

Because released time for the teachers was vital, intern teachers provided through a partnership with a local university were hired to teach for a full year at half salary in lieu of the standard one-semester student teaching experience. Teachers were thus given time to collaborate, attend conferences and take on additional school responsibilities. Additional financial support was required, and this was obtained through grants and corporate sponsorships.

Through this process, the principal empowered her teachers. She met individually with teachers to learn about their thoughts.

Some of these teachers indicated a desire to become involved in one or more of the school processes for change. For example, each of the teams had one representative attend weekly Building Leadership Team (BLT) meetings to participate in making most relevant decisions except those regarding personnel. Most of these teachers talked to the principal individually about being the team representatives. Other teachers indicated that they wished to attend conferences to learn more about middle school philosophy.

Communication within the school was now operating through individual and group meetings. The leadership process was shifting from top-down to "sideways." Decision making, for the most part, was now in the hands of teachers. For example, following BLT meetings, teacher representatives went back to their teams to discuss what had transpired and to gather new ideas to take to following meetings. Even members of the community who participated in this study, such as past PTA members and the city school board member, were positive about the school restructuring process, including the open communication it has initiated within the school community.

Several questions were raised through this study that might warrant further study: What were the benefits, if any, of this restructuring process to the broader community--parents, the elementary feeder schools, and the university that participated in the study? What changes, if any, did students (general and resource) realize in this restructuring process?

In conclusion, sideways leadership combined with top-down initiatives for school restructuring is a promising practice. The results of this study indicate that school administrators and teachers have

their own unique entry points in the change process: administrators at the onset and teachers after the vision for making a positive difference for students in their classrooms has been established.

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